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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/730,291	12/05/2003	James N. Curti	SALTER P42AUSP2	2585

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CONCORD, NH 03301

EXAMINER

STAICOVICI, STEFAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1732

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	12/27/2006	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/730,291

Applicant(s)

CURTI ET AL.

Examiner

Stefan Staicovici

Art Unit

1732

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE three MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-34 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 34 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12/05/03 and 5/23/05 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/05/03; 8/9/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☒ Other: IDS: 09/28/05.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I, claims 14-33, in the reply filed on October 23, 2006 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the product of claim 34 can be made only be the process of claims 13-33. This is not found persuasive because "the patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production." Hence, "[I]f the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." See MPEP §2113, citing, In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made **FINAL**.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

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Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 13-33 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of Curti (U.S. Patent No. 6,533,983 B2).

With regard to claims 14, 27 and 33, Claim 1 of Curti ('983) teaches a method of forming a cannula including, providing a cannula mandrel assembly parts, said parts comprising a pair of nare forming mandrels each defining an end, a main body forming mandrel having a central recessed section and openings to receive and engage the ends of the nare forming mandrels, and a mouthpiece forming mandrel having an end connector, the end connector defining a slot dimensioned to mate slidably with the central recessed section; assembling the parts to provide a cannula mandrel assembly defining interior spaces of the cannula; heating the cannula mandrel assembly to a desired temperature; providing a cannula forming polymeric material as a plastisol; dipping the heated cannula mandrel assembly in the plastisol to provide a desired thickness of partially cured polymer on the cannula mandrel assembly to form the cannula; heating the cannula material of the cannula to further cure the cannula material; and extracting the nare forming mandrels, the mouthpiece forming mandrel by removing the slot from the central recessed section, and the main body forming mandrel from the cannula. Because the claimed invention is fully encompassing a secondary reference is not required.

In regard to claims 15-19, 28 and 31-32, it is submitted that because Claim 1 of Curti ('983) teaches a mandrel assembly, that attachment portions is provided on each mandrel in order for the invention to function as described. Further, it is submitted that the nasal/oral

cannula formed by the process of Claim 1 of Curti ('983) has a mouthpiece extending radially and substantially perpendicular from the facepiece in order for the invention to function as described.

Specifically regarding claims 20-21, Claim 2 of Curti ('983) teaches a beryllium copper mandrel.

Regarding claims 22, 25, 30, Claim 1 of Curti ('983) teaches dipping of the mandrel assembly. Further, Claim 5 of Curti ('983) teaches multiple dipping steps.

In regard to claim 23, Claim 3 of Curti ('983) teaches heating the mandrel assembly to a temperature of about 350-550 °F.

Specifically regarding claim 24, Claim 4 of Curti ('983) teaches applying a mold release layer on the mandrel assembly.

Regarding claim 29, Claim 6 of Curti ('983) teaches partial curing of the polymeric material and further heating to continue the curing process. Although Claims 1-9 of Curti ('983) do not teach an oven, the use of an oven for post-curing purposes is well known, It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to use an oven for post-curing the polymer material in the process of Claims 1-9 of Curti ('983) because of known advantages that post-curing provides such as improved properties of the resulting molded product and also because post-curing ovens are easily available and easy to maintain, hence providing for an improved process.

4. Claims 13-33 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of Curti (U.S. Patent No. 6,533,984 B2).

With regard to claims 14, 27 and 33, Claim 1 of Curti ('984) teaches a method of forming a cannula including, providing a cannula mandrel assembly parts, said parts comprising a pair of nare forming mandrels each defining an end, a main body forming mandrel having a central recessed section and openings to receive and engage the ends of the nare forming mandrels, and a mouthpiece forming mandrel having an end connector, the end connector defining a slot dimensioned to mate slidingly with the central recessed section; assembling the parts to provide a cannula mandrel assembly defining interior spaces of the cannula; heating the cannula mandrel assembly to a desired temperature; providing a cannula forming polymeric material as a plastisol; dipping the heated cannula mandrel assembly in the plastisol to provide a desired thickness of partially cured polymer on the cannula mandrel assembly to form the cannula; heating the cannula material of the cannula to further cure the cannula material; and extracting the nare forming mandrels, the mouthpiece forming mandrel by removing the slot from the central recessed section, and the main body forming mandrel from the cannula. Because the claimed invention is fully encompassing a secondary reference is not required.

In regard to claims 15-19, 28 and 31-32, it is submitted that because Claim 1 of Curti ('984) teaches a mandrel assembly, that attachment portions is provided on each mandrel in order for the invention to function as described. Further, it is submitted that the nasal/oral cannula formed by the process of Claim 1 of Curti ('984) has a mouthpiece extending radially and substantially perpendicular from the facepiece in order for the invention to function as described.

Specifically regarding claims 20-21, Claim 2 of Curti ('984) teaches a beryllium copper mandrel.

Regarding claims 22, 25 and 30, Claim 1 of Curti ('984) teaches dipping of the mandrel assembly. Further, Claim 5 of Curti ('984) teaches multiple dipping steps.

In regard to claim 23, Claim 3 of Curti ('984) teaches heating the mandrel assembly to a temperature of about 350-550 °F.

Specifically regarding claim 24, Claim 4 of Curti ('984) teaches applying a mold release layer on the mandrel assembly.

Regarding claim 29, Claim 6 of Curti ('984) teaches partial curing of the polymeric material and further heating to continue the curing process. Although Claims 1-9 of Curti ('984) do not teach an oven, the use of an oven for post-curing purposes is well known, It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to use an oven for post-curing the polymer material in the process of Claims 1-9 of Curti ('984) because of known advantages that post-curing provides such as improved properties of the resulting molded product and also because post-curing ovens are easily available and easy to maintain, hence providing for an improved process.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

6. Claims 13-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The newly added limitation of a “facepiece mandrel” does not appear to have support in the original disclosure. Although the original disclosure appears to have support for a “main body mandrel,” the original disclosure does not appear to have support for a “facepiece mandrel.” It is noted that for the purpose of examination it has been assumed that the “facepiece mandrel” is the “main body mandrel.”

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Havstad (US Patent No. 3,731,900) in view of Collette *et al.* (US Patent No. 6,217,818 B1) and in further view of EP 0 933 094 A2.

Havstad ('900) teaches the basic claimed process of forming a nasal cannula including, providing a detachable cannula mandrel assembly having a main body (face piece) mandrel (20)

and at least one nare forming mandrel (24, 25), positioning said detachable cannula mandrel assembly in a mold and applying (injection molding) at least one coating of a thermoplastic polymeric material onto the surface of said detachable cannula mandrel assembly and disassembling said detachable cannula mandrel assembly to form a nasal cannula (see col. 4, lines 66-68, col. 5, lines 7-27 and Figure 2). It is submitted that the thermoplastic material cures on the mandrel in order for a nasal cannula to result as described.

Regarding claim 14, Havstad ('900) does not teach heating the cannula mandrel assembly. Collette et al. ('818) teach an injection molding process including, heating an internal mandrel during an injection molding process (col. 3, lines 58-60). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have heated the cannula mandrel assembly as taught by Collette et al. ('818) in the process of Havstad ('900) because, Collette et al. ('818) specifically teach that heating of the core allows for increased crystallization, which results in improved strength of a molded thermoplastic material and also because both references teach similar materials and processes. Further regarding claim 1, the process of Havstad ('900) in view of Collette et al. ('818) does not teach a nasal/oral cannula. EP 0 933 094 A2 teaches a nasal/oral cannula (see Figures 1 and 4). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a mouthpiece forming mandrel to form a nasal/oral mandrel as taught by EP 0 933 094 A2 in the process of Havstad ('900) in view of Collette et al. ('818) because, EP 0 933 094 A2 specifically teaches a variety of advantages of a nasal/oral cannula such as, permitting both the delivery of oxygen and the sampling of carbon dioxide, hence providing for an improved product.

9. Claims 14-19, 22-23, 26-27 and 29-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salter (US Patent No. 4,106,505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (US Patent No. 4,800,116) and in further view of Havstad (US Patent No. 3,731,900) and EP 0 933 094 A2.

Salter ('505) teaches the basic claimed process of forming a thermoplastic nasal cannula having a main body portion (13) and nasal tubular extensions (14, 15) by a dip molding process (col. 3, lines 49-50).

Regarding claims 14, 27 and 33, Salter ('505) does not teach a detachable mandrel assembly and heating the mandrel. Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) teach that a dip molding process requires dipping a heated mandrel into a solution of molten plastisol (col. 2, lines 25-30). Havstad ('900) teaches a process of forming a nasal cannula including, providing a detachable cannula mandrel assembly having a main body mandrel (20) and at least one nare forming mandrel (24, 25), positioning said detachable cannula mandrel assembly in a mold and applying at least one coating of a thermoplastic polymeric material onto the surface of said detachable cannula mandrel assembly and disassembling said detachable cannula mandrel assembly to form a nasal cannula (see col. 4, lines 66-68, col. 5, lines 7-27 and Figure 2). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a detachable cannula mandrel assembly as taught by Havstad ('900) and to have heated said detachable mandrel assembly as taught by Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) in the process of Salter ('505) because, Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) specifically teach that a dip molding process, such as taught by Salter ('505), includes heating of a mandrel, whereas Havstad ('900) teach the use of both integral and detachable mandrels in making a nasal cannula as taught by Salter ('505) and also because, both Havstad

(‘900) and Salter (‘505) teach similar materials and end-products. Further regarding claims 14, 27 and 33, the process of Salter (‘505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (‘116) and in further view of Havstad (‘900) does not teach a nasal/oral cannula. EP 0 933 094 A2 teaches a nasal/oral cannula (see Figures 1 and 4). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a mouthpiece forming mandrel to form a nasal/oral mandrel as taught by EP 0 933 094 A2 in the process of Salter (‘505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (‘116) and in further view of Havstad (‘900) because, EP 0 933 094 A2 specifically teaches a variety of advantages of a nasal/oral cannula such as, permitting both the delivery of oxygen and the sampling of carbon dioxide.

In regard to claims 15-19 and 31-32, it is noted that Havstad (‘900) specifically teaches a process of forming a nasal cannula including, providing a detachable cannula mandrel assembly having a main body mandrel (20) and at least one nare forming mandrel (24, 25). It is submitted that when assembling the main body mandrel (20) and the nare forming mandrels (24, 25) an attachment portion is present on the main body mandrel (20) and the nare forming mandrels (24, 25). Further, Havstad (‘900) teaches that cores (24, 25) are slidingly engaged with main core (20) (see Figure 2) such that a cannula is formed having a main tubular portion and nasal tubular portions. EP 0 933 094 A2 teaches a nasal/oral cannula (see Figures 1 and 4) having a plurality of tubular portions including a main portion, at least one nasal portion and an oral portion. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a mouthpiece forming mandrel to form a nasal/oral mandrel as taught by EP 0 933 094 A2 in the process of Salter (‘505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (‘116) and in further view of Havstad (‘900)

because, EP 0 933 094 A2 specifically teaches a variety of advantages of a nasal/oral cannula such as, permitting both the delivery of oxygen and the sampling of carbon dioxide. Hence, it is submitted that the process of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 teaches an assembled mandrel having a plurality of cores which form a plurality of tubular portions. Furthermore, it is submitted that a mouthpiece forming mandrel is present in the invention of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 and that an slidable attachment portion is present on each mandrel portion in order for a detachable mandrel to be formed as taught by Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2. Furthermore, it is submitted that the nasal/oral cannula formed by the process of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 has a mouthpiece extending radially and substantially perpendicular from the facepiece in order for the invention to function as described.

In regard to claims 22 and 30, Salter ('505) teaches a dip molding process (col. 3, lines 49-50).

Specifically regarding claim 23, Salter ('505) teaches a dip molding process including a polyvinyl chloride plastisol (col. 3, lines 51-52). Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) teach heating of a mandrel to a temperature of about 340 °F to about 380 °F when dipping said heated mandrel into polyvinyl chloride plastisol (col. 2, lines 25-27). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have heated a mandrel to a temperature of about 340 °F to about 380 °F as taught by Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) in the dipping process of Salter ('505) in view of

Havstad ('900) and in further view of EP 0 933 094 A2 because, Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) specifically teach that a dip molding process, such as taught by Salter ('505), includes heating of a mandrel to a temperature of about 340 °F to about 380 °F when dipping said heated mandrel into polyvinyl chloride plastisol and also because, both Salter ('505) and Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) teach similar materials and processes.

In regard to claims 26 and 29, Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) teach that during a dip molding process the material on the heated mandrel first gels (partially cures) and then fully cured in an oven (see col. 1, lines 22-36). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have partially cured the material on the heated mandrel and then fully cured said material in an oven as taught by Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) in the dipping process of Salter ('505) in view of Havstad ('900) and in further view of EP 0 933 094 A2 because, Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) specifically teach that a dip molding process, such as taught by Salter ('505), includes partial curing on the heated mandrel followed by total curing in an oven and also because, both Salter ('505) and Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) teach similar materials and processes.

10. Claims 20-21 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salter (US Patent No. 4,106,505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (US Patent No. 4,800,116) and in further view of Havstad (US Patent No. 3,731,900), EP 0 933 094 A2 and Lindberg (US Patent No. 3,931,381).

Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 teach the basic claimed process as described above.

Regarding claims 20 and 21, Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 do not teach a beryllium copper mandrel. Lindberg ('381) teaches that a beryllium-copper molding surface (mandrel) allows for improved molding release characteristics (see Abstract and col. 3, lines 29-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a beryllium-copper molding surface (mandrel) as taught by Lindberg ('381) in the process of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 because, Lindberg ('381) specifically teaches that a beryllium-copper molding surface (mandrel) allows for improved molding release characteristics.

In regard to claim 24, Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 do not teach applying a mold release coating to the mandrel. Lindberg ('381) teaches that the use of polytetrafluoroethylene coatings is well known as a mold release (see col. 2, lines 1-2 and col. 3, lines 41-43). Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a polytetrafluoroethylene coating as taught by Lindberg ('381) in the process of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 because, Lindberg ('381) specifically teaches that the use of a polytetrafluoroethylene coating on a mold surface is well known as a mold release.

11. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salter (US Patent No. 4,106,505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* (US Patent No. 4,800,116) and in further view of Havstad (US Patent No. 3,731,900), EP 0 933 094 A2 and Winder (US Patent No. 2,053,357).

Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 teach the basic claimed process as described above.

Regarding claim 25, Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 do not teach a plurality of dipping steps. Winder ('357) teaches that in a dipping process it is required to have a plurality of dipping steps (col. 2, line 64 through col. 3, line 3). Therefore it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided a plurality of dipping steps as taught by Winder ('357) in the process of Salter ('505) in view of Ventimiglia *et al.* ('116) and in further view of Havstad ('900) and EP 0 933 094 A2 because, Winder ('357) specifically teaches that redipping (plurality of dipping steps) increases the thickness of the resulting molded article, hence increasing the strength of the resulting molded article.

Conclusion

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Stefan Staicovici, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (571) 272-1208. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

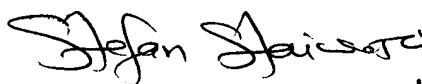
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christina Johnson, can be reached on (571) 272-1176. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

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may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Stefan Staicovici, PhD



Primary Examiner

12/20/06

AU 1732

December 20, 2006